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H FOR FLECK AND PARKS  
H PLEASE PASS TO CODEL PENCE

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [AMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [AFIN](#) [GM](#) [GR](#) [IZ](#) [OREP](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: COUNTRY CLEARANCE AND THREAT ASSESSMENT  
FOR CODEL PENCE + 8 (MAY 5-6)

REF: STATE 66587

¶1. Embassy warmly welcomes and grants country clearance for the visit of the House International Relations Committee Delegation led by Rep. Mike Pence and including Rep. Mike Ferguson, Rep. Lincoln Davis, Rep. Jim Costa, Rep. Joseph Pitts. Control Officer for the visit will be Marielle Martin, who can be reached during office hours at 30-210-2413, at home at 30-210-674-0086 or on cellular at 30-6948-04-4298. Her unclassified email is MartinMH@state.gov and her fax is 30-210-725-3025. The Embassy's after hours duty receptionist can be reached at 30-210-729-4444

¶2. Reservations have been made at the Hilton Athens, 46 Vasilissis Sofias Avenue, Athens 10160, Greece. The hotel phone number is 30-210-728-1000; fax 30-210-728-1111. We understand CODEL's fiscal data cable will authorize actual room rates and embassy will pay for rooms out of fiscal data. Room rates will be charged in euros, and these rates are inclusive of taxes and breakfast. Travelers are expected to pay their own hotel bills prior to departing. If the room reserved is not to be used, the reservation must be canceled prior 24 hours prior to expected arrival date, otherwise the CODEL or the traveler is responsible for the cost of the unused room.

¶3. The official schedule for Athens will begin on Friday May ¶5. The schedule will include a country team briefing, a meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister Valinakis, and cultural activities.

¶4. It is important that all visitors carefully read the information and instructions provided below. Post wants to ensure the best possible service to all official visitors and will work closely to arrange details of each visit.

¶5. Transportation is being arranged as requested and as per e-mail correspondence from the control officer.

¶6. Documents required: Diplomatic and official passport holders must have Greek diplomatic visas, a valid Schengen visa or diplomatic ID from any other Schengen country, in addition to their passport, in order to enter Greece. The Embassy will be unable to obtain planeside visas for USG employees arriving in Greece without proper documentation. Holders of tourist passports do not/not require visas. USG employees who plan to operate a motor vehicle while in Greece must be in possession of a valid U.S. drivers' license as well as a valid International Drivers' License and must carry proof of third party liability insurance while operating the vehicle.

¶7. Each visitor requiring support from the embassy, regardless of length of stay, must bring/forward fiscal data

1A. E-"a3Qy Athens is designated "h)gh" &kr i&dig%n'U3 terrorism. In the palQ\$ l)aa, Ar%ek t%Rrmrist groups have targ%4%d Prmm)f%.t G2ee)s as well as certain non%Ar%%k Mf&i#i!ls, including Americans. Se beli%V% tha4 4(e Threat to official US C-VeQf-e\*4 0e2Qg\*fed -n short-term assignments to Greece or visiting for tourism is relatively low. The indigenous groups historically have engaged in extensive operational surveillance over long periods of time. In 2003 and again in 2004, the Greek Government made significant progress to combat domestic terrorism by successfully convicting the leader and key hit men of the November 17 terrorist organization and of the ELA. 17N was

responsible for assassinating prominent Greeks and five members of the US Mission over the course of its 30-year history. Convicted ELA members were responsible for several bombings, attempted murders and were involved in at least one assassination. While these convictions likely impacted on the operational capabilities of 17N and ELA, it is too soon to assess whether the threat from domestic terrorism is completely eliminated. There have been several attacks against Greek police over the last year, including the December 2004 assassination of a special police guard in front of the residence of the British military attach. We urge vigilance and caution, as the worldwide threat from other terrorist groups against Americans in general remains high. Official Americans should assume they are potential targets.

¶B. Over the past year, the U.S. Embassy has experienced bomb threats, protest marches, and anti-U.S. demonstrations. These protests are generally peaceful though a few provoked random acts of violence. Travelers to Greece are advised that protests or demonstrations could occur at any time; unwitting observers or bystanders might be identified, to their disadvantage, as Americans. RSO recommends that official U.S. travelers in Greece remain alert when moving about in public places and avoid certain places where demonstrators frequently congregate. These places include the Polytechnical University area, located on 28 October (Patission) Street between the National Archeological Museum and Omonia Square; Exarchion Square, located near Kolonaki; Omonia and Syntagma Squares, which are often used as launch sites for large demonstrations; and Mavili Square, located near the U.S. Embassy. Visitors should keep abreast of news about large demonstrations and avoid these areas and metro stops.

¶C. The 4th European Social Forum is taking place in Athens all this week, with activities culminating this Friday and Saturday. The Regional Security Office expects potentially violent and dangerous demonstrations in and around the city to include the U.S. Embassy on Saturday afternoon. Anarchists are expected to be even more active than usual, and a likely location for such activity is in the Monastiraki and Plaka areas, as well as in Exarchia. It is strongly advised that these areas of town be avoided this entire week and especially this coming weekend.

¶D. Crime is rated "medium" in Greece. For TDY visitors, pick pocketing and purse snatching are the most common crimes. Taxis are generally safe though metered cabs are

recommended. Taxis too will often pick up more than one passenger unless prior arrangements are made. Crimes of opportunity - thefts, break-ins, and occasional scams - are on the rise. Travelers should be especially cautious with wallets, purses, and parcels when traveling on crowded streets, public buses, trolleys, and/or subways. There have been several instances of motorcyclists approaching cars stuck in traffic, reaching through open windows or smashing closed ones, and stealing whatever is within reach. We have also recently learned of a new method in which motorcyclists open the trunk of a vehicle and remove the contents. The Embassy recommends keeping purses, parcels, handbags, etc. out of sight under the seat or on the floor of the car. Windows should be kept closed and doors locked. Pedestrians may also be confronted by beggars and other street people who may attempt to divert attention, then steal unprotected valuables - either by pick pocketing or snatch-and-grab techniques. Women are generally safe from violent crime in Greece. Men are aggressive by American standards however when pursuing women.

¶D. Traffic in Greek urban areas, especially Athens and Thessaloniki, is undisciplined. Greece has a poor record within the European Union for traffic fatalities, mainly due to excessive speeding. Road rage is always a risk. Accidents can result in fistfights. Drivers in Greece should exercise caution and common sense. Drivers and

pedestrians alike should exercise extreme caution when operating motor vehicles or when walking along roadways. Moreover, tourists who rent motorbikes either on the Greek mainland or its islands must wear helmets and must take special precautions on the local roads that are typically poorly maintained and frequently pothole-ridden. Greece also has a poor record within the European Union in motorcycle deaths.

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